

**IN THE SPECIFICATION**

Amend the specification as follows:

Page 1, after the title, insert the following new paragraph:

--The present application is a continuation application of PCT/EP99/02547, filed

D 1 April 15, 1999, which designated the U.S.--

Page 15, delete the paragraph spanning lines 16-19 and insert the following

therefore:

R 2 --The present invention relates to an HCV NS3 protein defined above which is additionally treated with zwitterionic detergent. Empigen is also known as betaine n-dodecyl-N,N-dimethylglycine and is particularly preferred example of a zwitterionic detergent. Other suitable detergents are known by the skilled man and are reviewed also in WO96/04385.--

Insert the attached Abstract as a separate page after the claims pages.